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The Latin American Connection

June 1975

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June 17, 1975

The Latin American Connection

Summary

During the past few years, governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have increased their efforts to control the production and illicit flow of narcotics. In many countries some progress has been made. At the least, governments have been made aware and concerned, mainly through the efforts of the US, that their countries play significant roles in the drug abuse problem in the US. Still, the production and smuggling of heroin and cocaine from the area continues to flourish. There are no accurate statistics available, but the Latin American connection almost certainly accounts for the largest amount of illicit narcotics now entering the US.

The key trouble spots in attempting to halt the illicit drug flow into the US from Latin America presently are Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Mexico is the major source of heroin. Colombia and Ecuador are the key cocaine processing and trafficking countries. Peru and Bolivia are the world's largest producers of coca, the plant from which cocaine is derived. Leaders of these governments and others in the region have publicly announced their government's support for the fight against illicit drug production and trafficking, but they face an uphill struggle in dealing with the problem.

The high level of narcotics activity stems from a variety of factors, many of which are beyond the total control of authorities. Most countries lack resources and equipment, are unsophisticated in their law enforcement, and are plagued by corruption.

Eventually, progress will probably be realized in the more advanced and politically sophisticated countries. Leaders of Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina are intent on taking further steps to control the situation. Their sense of urgency will probably increase as drug abuse spreads among their own populations.

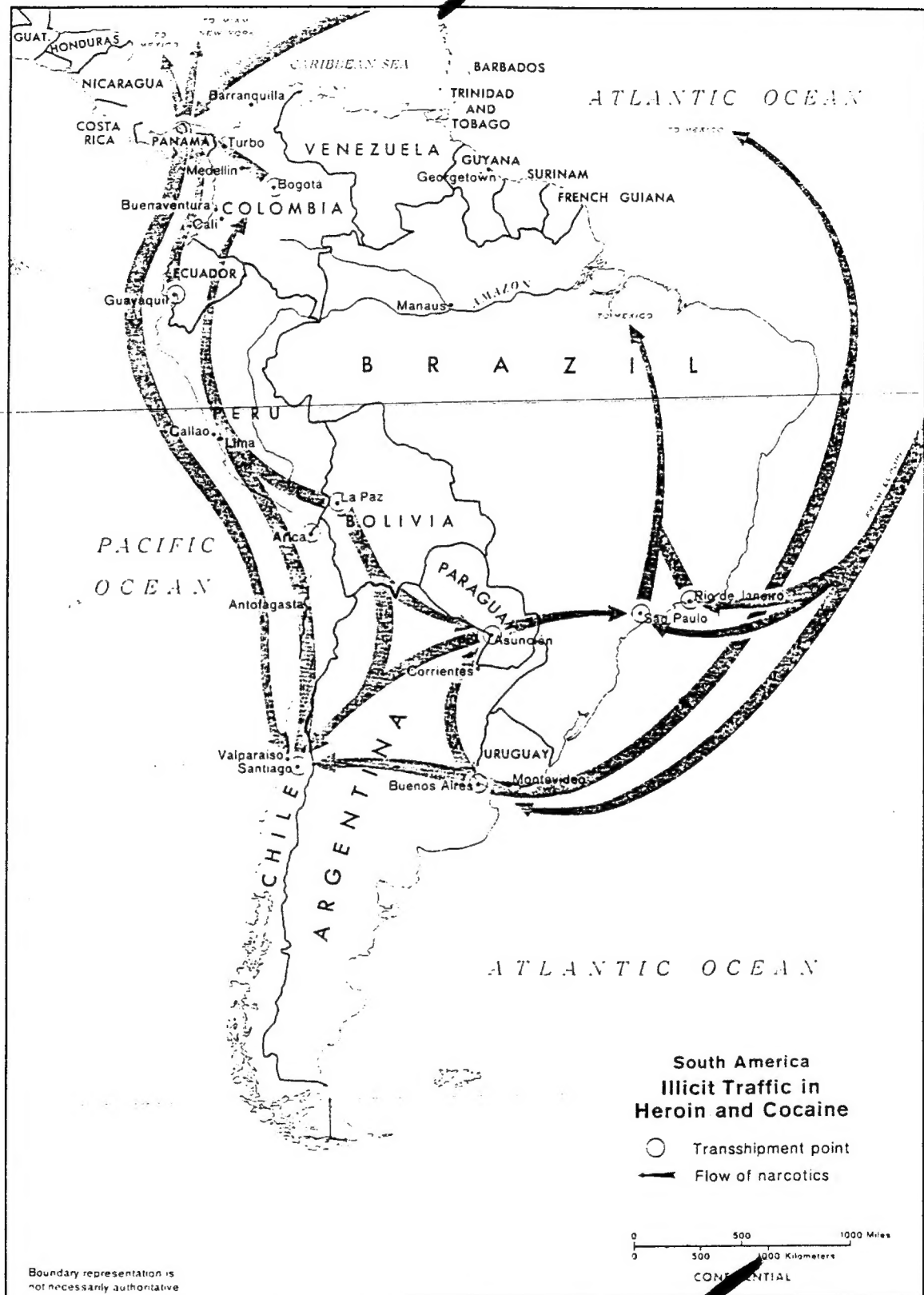
Progress in other countries will vary widely. Traffickers will continue to shift their operations to those countries where law enforcement and government resources are weakest.

Stemming the flow of heroin is a more likely possibility in the longer term since it is recognized as the most harmful narcotic, and growing the opium poppy plant is illegal in all Latin American countries. Cocaine traffic will be more difficult to deter since the coca leaf has been used by Indians in the high plains of the Andes for centuries.

Even should inroads be made on the many problems, controlling the flow of narcotics into the US will be a slow and difficult process as long as demand remains close to present levels and trafficking in narcotics remains so extraordinarily profitable.

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Scope of the Problem

Huge quantities of heroin, cocaine, and marijuana are produced and processed in Latin American and Caribbean countries and then smuggled into the US. The area almost certainly is the major source of illicit narcotics now entering the US. Drug traffickers in the area have increased their operations in the past few years mainly in response to three developments: tighter enforcement controls on heroin trafficking in Western Europe; the 1971 ban on opium production in Turkey; and a rise in the popularity of cocaine in the US.

Mexico, for example, has supplanted Turkey as the major source of the heroin consumed in the US. Roughly 60 to 70 percent of the heroin seized in the US in the last year was either produced in or transshipped through Mexico. The European - Latin American connection is used to exchange South American cocaine for heroin refined in Europe, though apparently traffic has lessened in recent years because of the stricter measures in Europe. Opium poppy fields have also been found in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, but they apparently are not widespread nor are these countries large producers of heroin.

The trafficking of cocaine from South America has increased dramatically to meet the rising demand in the US. Virtually all of the cocaine that enters the US originates in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, or Ecuador, the countries that make up the coca leaf growing and processing region of South America. US seizures of cocaine—almost all of it originating in those countries—have increased 700 percent since 1969.

Marijuana and its derivatives, coming mainly from Mexico, Jamaica, and Colombia but prevalent in many other countries, are smuggled in huge quantities throughout the hemisphere.

Many governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have made some headway in fighting the problem. At the least, they are aware and concerned that their countries are major sources of illicit drugs entering the US. In some cases, they have formed new narcotics police units, launched large eradication and interdiction campaigns with some success, and toughened drug laws. Most of these moves can be attributed to US influence.

With continued US prodding [REDACTED] a gradual improvement in the caliber of performance by the Latin governments is likely over the long run, but progress will not come easily. Several factors pose problems:

- A long tradition of smuggling
- Corruption among government officials and law enforcement agencies

- Long, unpatrolled, and busy borders and vast reaches of inaccessible land
- Lack of resources, equipment, and trained personnel
- Unsophisticated and frequently uncoordinated enforcement efforts
- Entrenched and well-financed criminal elements
- Weak judicial systems and inadequate extradition laws
- Poor coordination among governments in the region

Smuggling is endemic throughout Latin America. Enormous quantities of contraband goods—whiskey, cigarettes, TV sets, guns, and precious gems—are easily transported from one country to another. Sometimes such items move across three or more borders before they reach their destination. Under these circumstances, illicit drug trafficking is attractive and relatively easy. Because smuggling and contraband are fairly commonplace, it is difficult to arouse the public and the authorities against such trafficking when it involves drugs.

Corruption is widespread. In many countries it is almost a way of life; without payoffs and bribes many of the everyday government functions, from issuing auto permits to export licenses, could not be accomplished. Profits from drug trafficking are so great that it is worthwhile to bribe low-ranking police and government officials to look the other way. Often the very officials who are responsible for suppressing smuggling are themselves deeply involved. Influential families and community leaders in many countries also participate.

The geography of many Latin American countries is ideal for drug production and smuggling operations. The long borders, difficult terrain, rivers, hidden bays and inlets, and myriad airstrips enable the narcotics trafficker to choose among routes and methods.

Most governments do not have enough equipment, money, and trained personnel to cope with the problem.

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Law enforcement against narcotics violators is weak in many countries. Police forces are generally inexperienced in drug matters and most governments do not have a central agency for handling drug violations. Rivalries

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and jealousies among the various agencies dealing with narcotics hinder progress. Coordination and exchange of intelligence is many times sorely lacking.

Well-entrenched, well-organized, and well-financed criminals run the international trafficking networks. In many areas they operate with near impunity. They have shown considerable flexibility in shifting their operations to countries where law enforcement is weakest.

Judicial systems in many countries are weak and many times slow to act on narcotics offenses. Lenient sentencing of drug dealers is common. Extradition treaties with some Latin American nations do not cover narcotics.

Regional programs, regional cooperation, and a complete and honest exchange of information among the Latin nations on narcotics matters are generally lacking. One of the few regional meetings in recent years, a conclave of representatives from six South American nations, is scheduled for this summer in Bolivia. Another, sponsored by the Brazilian Federal Police, is planned for Brasilia in the fall.

The Traffickers' Routes

Heroin from Mexico and Europe and cocaine from South America find their way into the US over a vast variety of routes. The techniques used by traffickers are limited only by their imagination. From Mexico it is relatively easy to smuggle heroin and cocaine into the US across the long and largely unpatrolled border. Route 15, the main north-south highway along the Pacific coast, is the chief artery for moving the narcotics within Mexico. A new, paved road from the tip of Baja California to the US border is also thought to be heavily used by smugglers. Trafficking reportedly is increasing from the Pacific ports of Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, Manzanillo, and Guaymas via ferryboat to La Paz on the tip of Baja California and via private aircraft to hidden landing strips on the peninsula.

Border towns like Tijuana, Nogales, Ensenada, Agua Prieta, and Ciudad Juarez are distribution centers for drugs awaiting movement into the US. Much heroin and cocaine moves by air from Mexico both in commercial airliners and in small, privately owned craft that use hidden airstrips, straight stretches of roads, or paved strips along irrigation canals. About 100 US-registered aircraft have been confiscated by the Mexican government in the past few years. Most of them were found to be carrying narcotics.

In Central and South America, practically all of the major cities have served as stopping-off points for narcotics destined for the US. The main

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ports of entry for European heroin are Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Montevideo, and Asuncion. Heroin smuggled into Buenos Aires, for example, may travel by river to Paraguay, where it is loaded aboard private aircraft and flown to Brazil. In Brazil it may be shipped directly to the US by sea or commercial aircraft or be diverted to Colombia, Ecuador, or Panama via Santiago, Chile. Cocaine from Peru or Bolivia is frequently funneled directly to the US through several centers: Santiago, Valparaiso, and Arica, Chile; La Paz, Bolivia; Lima and Callao, Peru; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Cali, Bogota, Turbo, and Barranquilla, Colombia. Large amounts go through Panama, Central America, and Mexico. Large shipments go by sea or air; smaller quantities are carried by couriers, many of them Colombian, who account for the greatest part of the traffic.

Many islands of the Caribbean also play important roles in the illicit traffic. Aruba and Curacao, in the Netherlands Antilles off the coast of Venezuela, are active transshipment points for European heroin, much of it originating in the Dutch ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. The islands may also be a way station for South American cocaine on its way to Miami and New York.

The Trouble Spots

Mexico: Despite the good efforts of Mexico and the US, the narcotics problem has worsened in the last few years: Mexican heroin has largely filled the void left in the US market by the reduction of European heroin, the transit traffic in cocaine has increased considerably, and marijuana continues to cross the border in multi-ton lots.

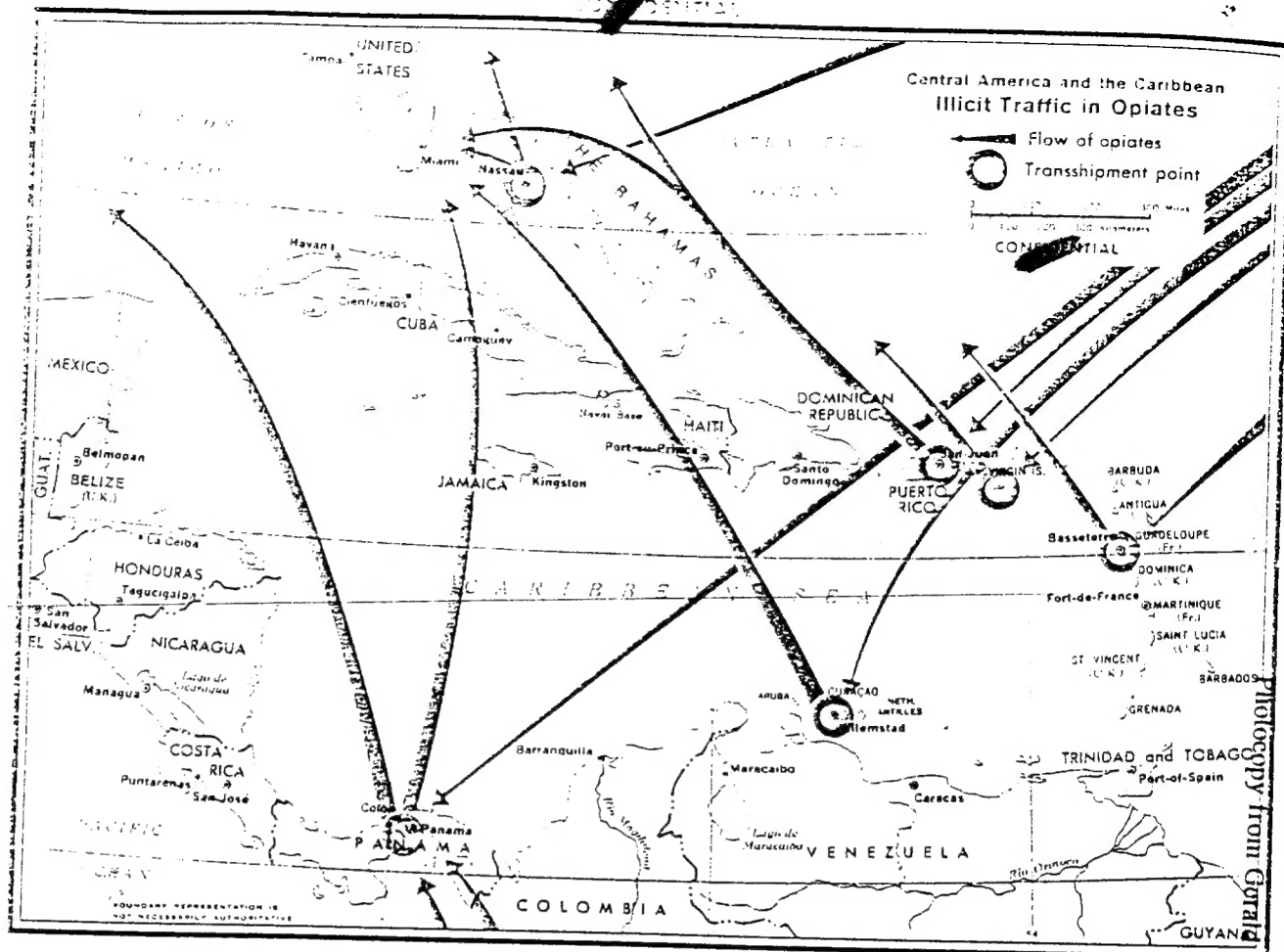
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[REDACTED] the Mexicans to carry the war to the remote, clandestine opium poppy and marijuana fields, which they apparently have been doing with a vengeance in the past several weeks. Mexican-supplied statistics, which are largely unverifiable, show that the opium poppy destruction campaign has been extraordinarily successful this year. It is too early to tell if this success will result in a significant reduction in the production of heroin in Mexico and an accompanying drop in the illicit traffic into the US, since cultivation may be expanding to compensate for the fields being destroyed.

Opium poppies are illegally grown in thousands of clandestine fields in at least 10 of the 31 states. Most of them are located in the mountains and

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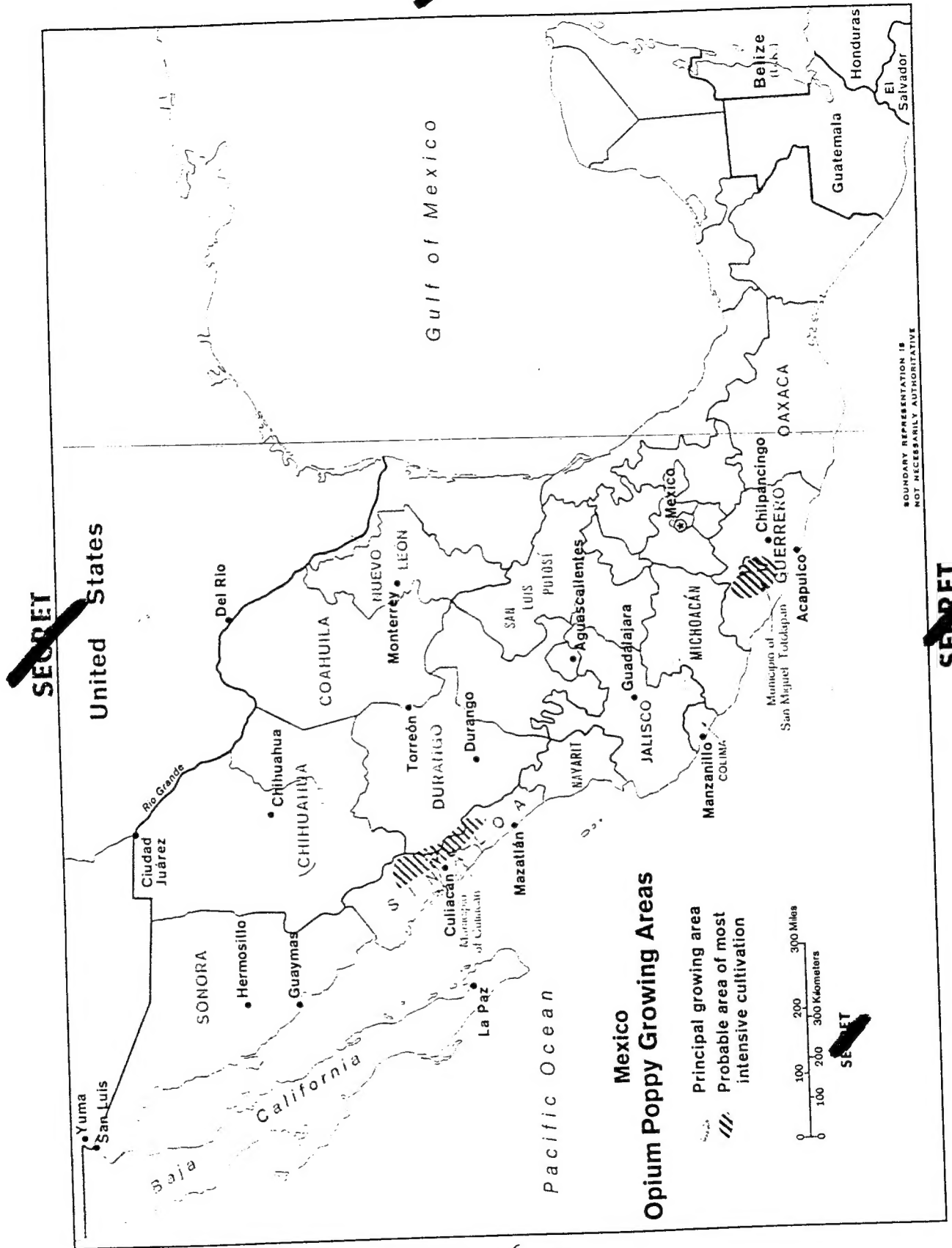
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hills of the western states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua. [REDACTED] last spring and fall turned up nearly 1,500 opium poppy fields in an 750-square-mile area in this region, and many others almost certainly exist. Another large growing area is found in the southwestern states of Guerrero, Michoacan and Oaxaca. In many areas, depending on weather and altitude, two crops are harvested a year—one in early spring and one in September or October.

Heroin-producing laboratories have been identified in 13 states. A large concentration of them is believed to be located in and around Culiacan, Sinaloa—the heroin center of Mexico. Although big labs have been seized, the more common type is an individual enterprise, mobile and simple in operation, producing a few kilograms per batch of opium. They require little space—often a kitchen or a home suffices—and they can be hidden in the mountains or in cities themselves. Cocaine is not grown or processed in Mexico but passes through it in abundant quantities.

Hundreds of networks and gangs are involved, as are hundreds of individuals, many of them American tourists seeking to make a quick but risky profit. As of February 1975, there were 420 US citizens languishing in Mexican jails on narcotics charges. Some traffickers use narcotics as barter for guns from American buyers.

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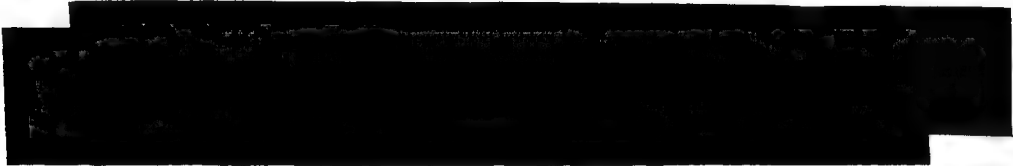

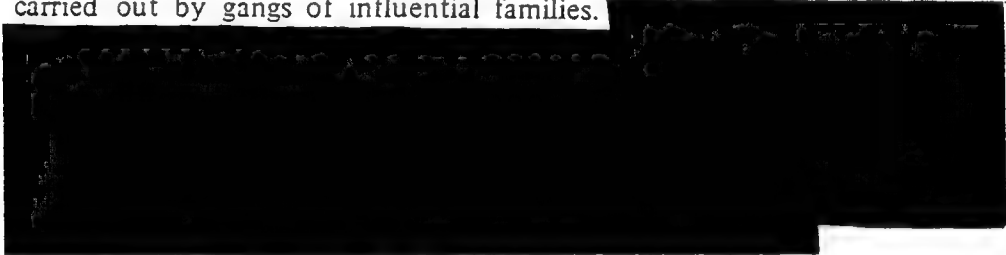
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There is no limit on the ways that narcotics can be smuggled into the US from Mexico. Entry is by land, sea, or air--no single method appears to be preferred over another. Smuggling by air is substantial: in May 1974, US narcotics agents, monitoring radar near Del Rio, Texas, discovered about one illegal crossing by air per hour within a 100-mile radius of Del Rio. The locale is not the most active crossing area in Texas.

Some bizarre methods have been used. One major trafficking network in northern Sonora last year was said to be packaging crude opium and morphine in plastic bags and shoving them down the throats of cattle. The animals were then shipped to a border town, where they were slaughtered, and the narcotics removed and processed there into heroin. Crisis center workers on the US side of the border say that a favorite, but dangerous, method of smuggling is to swallow a balloon containing about two grams of heroin and pass it through the body. People also have been known to shoot arrows, to which an ounce or less of heroin is attached, across narrow portions of the Rio Grande.

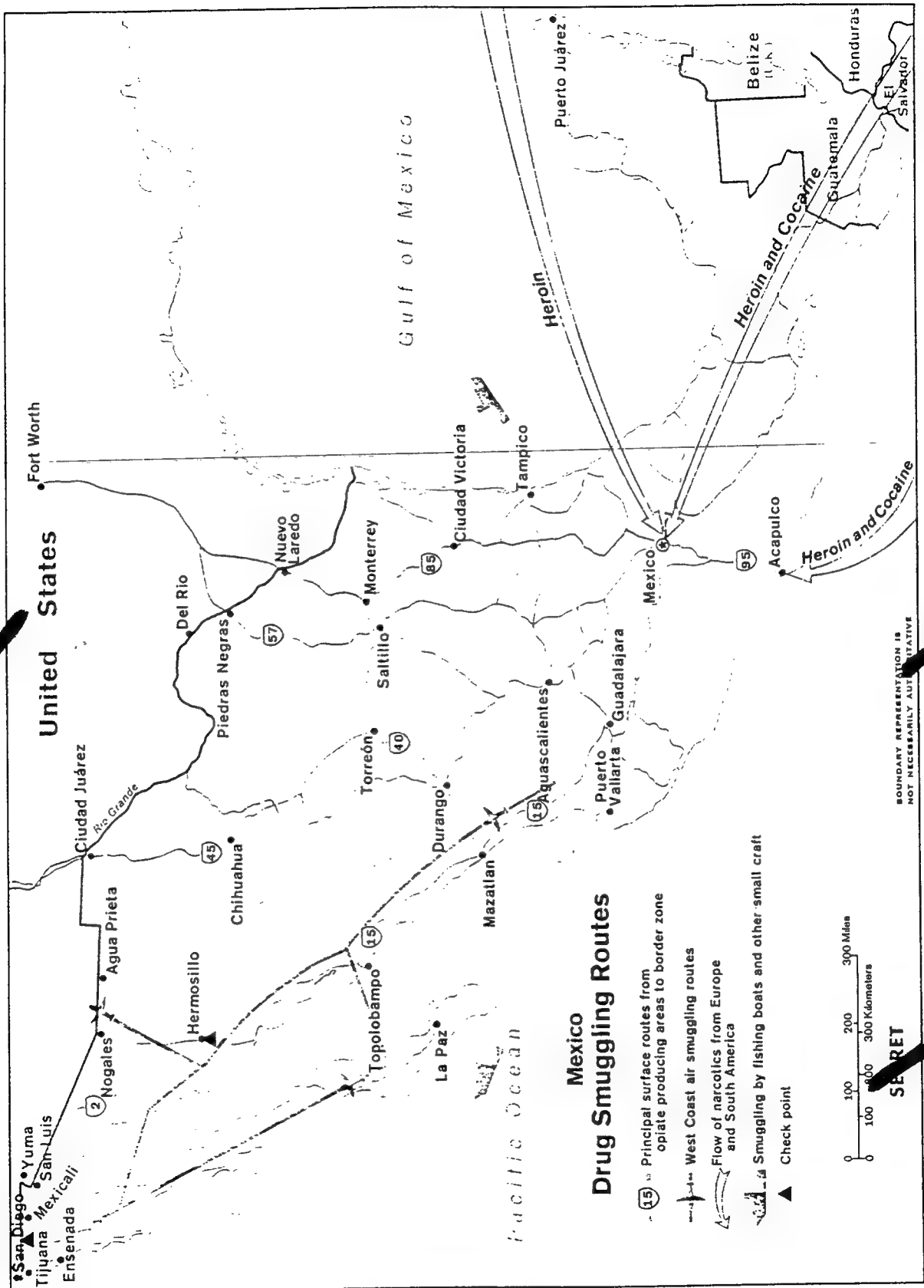
A Family Affair

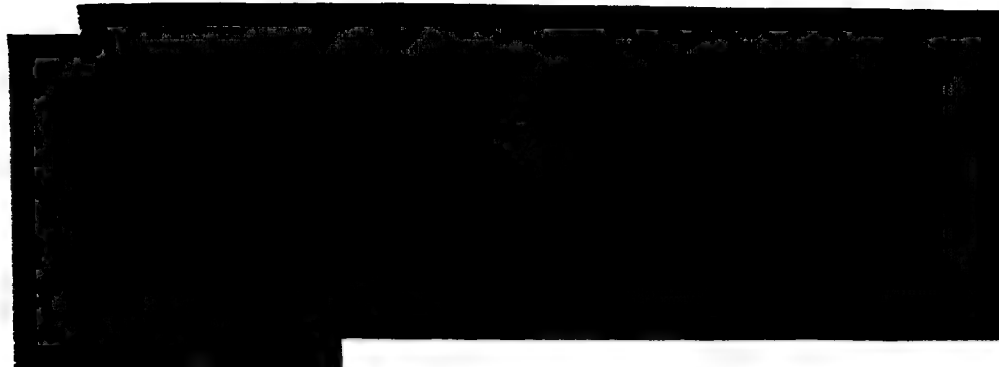
Trafficking in Mexico, as in most of Latin America, is many times carried out by gangs of influential families.



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Coping With The Problem

Although high-level Mexican officials are committed to attacking the issue, government agencies are alone unable to cope with the problem. The Federal Judicial Police, charged with enforcing narcotic laws under the guidance and control of the attorney general, number only about 340 and they must enforce all federal laws. They are ill-trained in narcotics, without long-term career status, woefully underpaid, and susceptible to bribery. Moves and plans are afoot to improve the quality of the force—a training academy was established last July, and the attorney general plans to increase manpower and raise salaries—but it will probably be a couple of years or more before improvements are evident.

The army, which for many years has sent thousands of troops into the countryside to destroy plantings of opium poppies and marijuana, remains too ill-equipped, overworked, and poorly funded to be expected to defeat the problem. The army's main role of maintaining stability in the rural areas detracts somewhat from its anti-narcotics efforts. Drug campaigns sometimes complicate the security problem by arousing the opposition of campesinos whose crops are destroyed.

The army operates its narcotics campaign in two ways: it provides manpower for seasonal eradication efforts when directed by the attorney

general, and it runs its own separate crop destruction program in the military sectors where the poppies and marijuana are grown.

Despite all the problems, the army manages to destroy large quantities of opium poppies and marijuana—if the statistics it provides the US embassy are anywhere near accurate. For example, the total area of poppy fields reported destroyed in the first four months of this year has already surpassed by a wide margin the total reported destroyed during all of 1974. According to the statistics, nearly 33 million square meters were destroyed through April; the total for all of 1974 was about 22.5 million square meters. The total number of poppy fields reported destroyed in the first four months of 1975 is 8,011 compared to 9,825 in all of 1974.

The spring eradication campaign being waged by the army and police in the states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua began in February and ended in April. The campaign accounted for a large part of this year's increased destruction totals—about one third of the area and about one half of the fields, according to the Mexican-supplied figures. The goal of destroying 5,000 acres of opium poppy fields in Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua fell short by about 1,500 acres, but the amount is impressive nonetheless.

On the surface, this year's destruction looks significant, but it is not certain whether it will make a large dent in Mexico's opium and heroin production and thus result in a reduced flow into the US. This is mainly because it is not known how big a crop of opium poppies is really grown in Mexico. Other areas besides the Sinaloa-Durango-Chihuahua and the Guerrero-Michoacan-Oaxaca areas may be prolific producers. Growers may be taking more care to make their fields inaccessible to destruction teams. The continued use of technical aids, however, may eventually help determine the extent of poppy cultivation. This, plus monitoring of the presence of Mexican heroin in the US, will probably make it easier to assess the effects of the Mexican eradication efforts.

Other Measures

Along with stepped-up crop destruction and enforcement efforts, the Mexicans have taken other measures. Chief among them is a newly revised drug law that gives stiffer penalties to traffickers but lighter sentences to young, first-time drug users. The minimum sentence for trafficking has been increased from three years to five years and three months, making a jail term mandatory. Under Mexican law persons sentenced to less than five years can be released on bail. Persons caught growing opium poppies, producing heroin, or financing those who do so will be subject to the same penalty as traffickers.

Efforts have been made in recent months to rid the police and judicial system of corruption, but graft is so prevalent at state and local levels that when one corrupt official is removed another one is likely to take his place. The head of the most important trafficking organization in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, for example, has had to lie low for the past several months because his "protectors" in the local government and police were fired by a newly elected governor. Other groups are maneuvering for control over the lucrative Ciudad Juarez drug business and are building their own coterie of protectors. One of them allegedly is the new governor's brother. According to a knowledgeable source, the former drug czar will make a comeback and assume full control in the area after the dust settles.

Federal and state judicial police in the states of Sonora and Baja California have reportedly been operating very effectively against small, independent traffickers because they compete with the large, organized gangs that pay the police for protection. Wide publicity is given to such arrests to verify the effectiveness of the war on narcotics traffickers.

Prospects

Mexican officials are committed to stemming the flow of drugs from their country to the US. [REDACTED] progress will eventually be evident. The vigorous and apparently extensive destruction of drug crops in the field, if done effectively and repeatedly, cannot help but make a mark. The use of herbicides to destroy the crops is being reconsidered by the government after being rejected some time ago for environmental reasons. If adopted, this method will probably be helpful.

Still, advances will be subject to pitfalls. Corruption will remain the single most inhibiting factor despite the government's efforts to combat it. Rooting out the graft poses a dilemma. Exposing the corrupt officials is politically embarrassing in some cases and dangerous to enforcement officials in others.

Mexican officials will remain sensitive to outside efforts to deal with the problem. [REDACTED]

The growers and traffickers may in time feel the pressure of effective countermeasures, but they have proved to be a resourceful lot. Putting major traffickers out of business will be a difficult task. Mexico will remain a convenient country to operate in for those involved in narcotics and there is no overwhelming reason why they should not attempt to increase their activities.

Colombia

Colombia plays a major role in the international narcotics smuggling picture. As the world's largest producer of refined cocaine, it is the key jumping off point for cocaine shipments to the US. The influx of cocaine is increasing yearly, as is obvious from the following statistics on cocaine seizures and arrests by the Drug Enforcement Administration in the US. Many of the seizures are directly attributable to Colombian sources.

Cocaine Seized (Pounds)

1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
305	787	974	1,125	1,455

Cocaine-related Arrests

1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
1,008	1,284	870	1,443	1,739

Leaves from the coca bush are freely available in Bolivia and Peru and are easily converted to coca paste. Some coca leaf is also grown in parts of Colombia. Laboratories scattered throughout the country refine the product and send it on to Bogota and other cities for distribution to couriers who smuggle it into the US via Mexico, Canada, and Europe. It is also brought into the US directly by all available means of private and commercial transportation.

The "banana zone" on the north coast of Colombia near the Panamanian isthmus is an active area for traffickers. Cocaine is secreted aboard banana boats leaving for the US from ports along the coast. Local authorities are unable to control the situation because of the vast financial resources of the traffickers. Private aircraft from the US airlift substantial amounts of cocaine from the north coast area. Colombian authorities are beginning to tighten controls along the coast, but traffickers in turn appear to be shifting their operations inland to escape the pressure.

The Colombian traffickers are based primarily in Medellin, Cali, and Bogota. According to Drug Enforcement Administration intelligence officials, they have rapidly advanced since 1971 from almost totally unorganized groups into highly sophisticated organizations. They usually are structured along classic organized-crime family lines. Violence is commonly

used to maintain cohesion within the groups. Small amounts of cocaine are smuggled into the US by couriers, or "mules," who are normally recruited while attempting to obtain visas for entry into the US. Couriers caught with narcotics are many times allowed by US courts to return home without being prosecuted. Larger shipments require middlemen; one large Colombian organization has established several legitimate import/export companies to facilitate the smuggling. Potential profits are enormous. It is estimated that a kilogram of cocaine that costs about \$300 to produce can be ultimately sold in New York for up to \$30,000.

There are several factors that make Colombia a highly desirable trans-shipment point.

~~-Its geography makes it a springboard between North and South~~ America. Much of the commercial air traffic from South America passes through Colombia en route to the US. It is a large country with a long coast line and few paved roads along the coast. Smugglers can pick from a large number of clandestine airfields along the coast and in the mountains.

-Smuggling of goods other than drugs has been accepted and tolerated in Colombia for generations. Narcotics traffickers use the channels already established.

-A large, sophisticated criminal element with a well-established capacity to subvert enforcement efforts exists. In the last few years Colombia has become a haven for drug smugglers and individuals who finance the operations and exert political influence to protect shipments.

-Colombian narcotics enforcement agencies have shown a lack of coordination that inhibits effective action against traffickers. Ground rules on drug enforcement are ill defined.

-The judicial system is bureaucratically encrusted and inefficient. Colombian courts have a history of long delays in hearing cases. Many judges are notorious for their venality.

Colombian authorities realize their country's prominent role in the international drug traffic. They have indicated by certain actions, as well as words, that they mean to control it. President Lopez, in office less than a year, has appointed new directors for two of Colombia's three agencies responsible for drug enforcement, the Department of Administrative Security and Customs. The new directors, reputedly honest and hard-working men, have reorganized and cleaned up their departments [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The other agency, the National Police, has recently improved its performance on drug-related

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matters. Drug seizures and arrests are increasing and the conviction rate for traffickers is improving. Legislation has been passed to end the role of customs judges, who are known for their corruption, in adjudicating narcotics cases.

Still, the problem seems insurmountable in the short term. There is no lack of will on the part of Colombian authorities, but the factors working against them and the rising demand for narcotics make it increasingly difficult to stem the tide.

Ecuador

Cocaine trafficking is the major narcotics problem in Ecuador. Tons of cocaine paste from Peru and Colombia are smuggled into Ecuador and huge amounts are converted into cocaine in the many clandestine laboratories located in coastal areas and in the Andean highlands. Large amounts of Peruvian cocaine paste also pass through Ecuador into Colombia for processing. Ecuadorean-processed cocaine is moved secretly into Colombia, Mexico and eventually into the US.

The courier system is the preferred channel, but considerable amounts go out by sea and air, concealed within legitimate cargo, directly to the US. The center of the illicit traffic in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city and one of the most important ports on the Pacific coast of South America.

Ecuador has for decades been a center of organized contraband trade. The system is so entrenched that it is the exceptional member of the police or customs service who is not in some way receiving payment from a smuggler. The borders with Colombia and Peru are poorly patrolled, so that in some cases ingenuity rather than corruption is all that is needed to move contraband. Ecuadorean drug officials have been slow to get together with their counterparts in Peru and Colombia to discuss border controls.

Over the past few years, opium poppies have been reported growing in Ecuador's Andean highlands. Estimates of the amount of heroin processed run from 25 to 125 kilograms a month—but authorities have been unable to find significant poppy plots or to purchase opium or heroin clandestinely. Authorities moreover list no heroin seizures for the past two years.

Ecuador was initially slow to move on the narcotics problem, preferring to clamp down on the small-time peddler rather than the international trafficker. In recent months, however, the government has started to take countermeasures and has increased its cooperation with the US. The narcotics law was amended to form an interministerial committee for drug control and to enhance enforcement efforts.

A reorganization law for the police was passed in March 1975 after remaining in draft for more than a year without being implemented. The new law provides for a national criminal investigation directorate, a part of which will be the narcotics enforcement unit with branches in each province. Several important traffickers and cocaine chemists have been put out of business. Many chemists have fled to Colombia.

Not all those apprehended remain on the sidelines for long. One of the most important traffickers in South America, Francisco Adum Adum, has been "in custody" awaiting trial for over a year, [REDACTED]

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Ecuador, like most other countries in Latin America, is plagued by narcotics-related corruption. Some government and police officials have reportedly used their influence to release traffickers from prison, have accepted bribes to free them, or have blackmailed them for their freedom. [REDACTED]

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Though police are beginning to improve, it will probably be some time before they become truly effective against the drug traffickers. Poor planning, inadequate use of personnel, and a lack of effective controls at the borders severely hinder their efforts. Even with organizational improvements and a change in enforcement priorities, narcotics production and trafficking are likely to continue and possibly increase given the existing corruption, organizational deficiencies, availability of the raw product, and the strength of the drug networks.

Peru

Peru is possibly the world's largest supplier of coca leaf that finds its way into the illicit drug market as cocaine. The US embassy estimates that 70 percent or more of the world's coca leaf supply comes from Peru. The crop is grown legally, under government supervision and exported to the US and Europe. The foreign currency earnings are not substantial. For example, in 1972, 522,000 pounds were exported for \$623,000.

A Peruvian biological researcher reports that of the some 20 million kilograms of leaves produced annually, only one fifth of them can be counted on to be chewed by the Andean campesinos or used for other legal

purposes. The rest, some 16 million kilograms, fairly pours into the illegal market each year. Substantial quantities of cocaine can be made from this: 1,000 kilograms of average strength coca leaves will reduce to about 10 kilograms of coca paste, which in turn is reducible to 4 kilograms of cocaine.

While the first step in producing cocaine may mainly involve small "mom and pop" backyard operations in the mountains, there are good indications that large-scale rings carry out the subsequent steps. Traffickers with international connections then move the cocaine. Traditionally, the traffickers in Peru have shipped to Mexico and from there overland to the US. Recently, violators have been caught attempting to re-route cocaine through Europe to the US and through Europe to Canada to the US.

~~Opium production does not amount to much in Peru. Small amounts are grown in the Andean highlands and possibly in the northern border area, primarily for medicinal use by the local population. The situation presently does not lend itself to exploitation by drug traffickers.~~

The major roadblocks to progress on the narcotics problem in Peru are the attitudes of private interests who have profited from coca farming and of the government, which does not view coca as a problem affecting the Peruvian people. Most officials in fact regard drug trafficking as an American problem. Peruvian youth do not abuse narcotics in any substantial quantity. The local Indian custom of chewing coca leaves extends back to an epoch before recorded Peruvian history. While this custom was recently labelled "anti-revolutionary," the government does not appear to be actively seeking a reduction in coca cultivation. Production may in fact be increasing.

The Peruvians do not have a national policy on the control of coca products and commerce. The problem is worsened by a notorious lack of cooperation and coordination among the various agencies and ministries involved in coca policy. Enforcement suffers from a severe lack of funds, equipment, and experienced narcotics supervisory officials in the Peruvian Investigations Police, a detective force with national jurisdiction. Most of the illegal activity takes place in remote, nearly inaccessible areas, making control difficult for the authorities. A few police officers and other government officials have been caught protecting violators or have been involved in outright trafficking.

The problem is no less serious within the courts. Existing drug laws are adequate, but the courts have been generally lenient. Cocaine traffickers have traditionally gotten off with only limited fines and jail terms.

Government officials have discussed the possibilities of substituting other crops for coca on occasion, but the present administration generally

seems apathetic toward the idea. Crop substitution seems far in the future. The plight of the Indians and their dependence on chewing the leaf present political, physical, and economic problems that will not be solved quickly.

Peru will continue to be a major supplier of coca leaves for the illicit market unless enforcement capabilities improve and government attitudes and methods change.

Bolivia

The problem in Bolivia is similar to that in Peru—the transformation of coca into cocaine and its subsequent smuggling. There are no reliable figures on the amount of illegal cocaine that is produced in or smuggled out of Bolivia, but it ranks close to Peru in that respect. Most Bolivian cocaine ends up, of course, in the US.

Coca leaf cultivation, selling, transportation, and chewing are legal. In recent years, increases in production have been noted, but evidence suggests that chewing the leaf is declining. The difference between local production and chewing is doubtless being used to manufacture cocaine. Cocaine in various stages of processing easily flows over Bolivia's borders to Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. Numerous cocaine refineries, most of them unsophisticated and makeshift, are located mainly in rural areas. Some cocaine may be exchanged for European heroin that is then sent to the US. Heroin production and processing in Bolivia are not extensive.

Enforcement is hindered by budgetary restraints and apparent unwillingness by the authorities to arrest major traffickers. [REDACTED] lacks a broad political base and because of this is reluctant to execute policies that could generate public discontent. The narcotics section of the National Police is inexperienced and short on equipment. The judicial system works very slowly. Many individuals arrested on drug violations are able to buy their way out of the charge. Some high-ranking government officials are suspected of being involved in trafficking.

Despite the problems, the Bolivian government is cooperating with the US, and is apparently willing to take more aggressive action. New drug laws are being implemented, a meeting of drug officials from neighboring countries is planned for this summer, and crop substitution programs are being considered to cope with the situation.

Even so, efforts to prevent the seepage of coca leaf to the illicit market will be difficult. Thousands of farmers and Indians are culturally and financially dependent on coca. The size of the country, its rugged landscape, its extensive land borders with its neighbors, its primitive communications system, and its limited resources, both human and financial, further complicate efforts to defeat the problem.